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ABSTRACT

This monograph is directed toward policy makers, parents, students, educational leaders, teachers, taxpayers and society as a whole, aiming at their involvement and the attainment of excellence in education. People living in a rapidly changing society have many expectations for education, among which are the teaching of moral and ethical values, basic skills, affective objectives, the existence of a force for social action, and relevance and accountability. One problem in achieving excellence is that diverse groups fail to communicate properly and do not become effectively involved in setting goals for quality in education. Excellence in education occurs when quality becomes a primary goal; when flexible attitudes prevail toward procedures in schools and school systems; when high standards are observed in the home, school and community; when priorities permit resources to support excellence; when the learning needs of all are included; and, when continuous, cooperative, comprehensive long range planning is implemented. Public education is the responsibility of each state, which must provide the needed leadership through a state coordinating agency. The local educational board must accept responsibility for improving schools. In all cases, wide involvement of lay, professional, and governmental elements of society is necessary. Related documents are ED 047 409 and ED 051 570. (SJM)

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directions to excellence in education

Prepared by
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Based on the Publication

Planning and Providing for Excellence in Education

IMPROVING STATE LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION
Denver, Colorado
1971

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All people do not agree on those things a child should be taught, both with respect to improvement in virtue and a happy life, nor is it clear whether the object of it should be to improve the reason or rectify the morals.

Aristotle

During most of the centuries since this statement was made, the privileged classes thought they had the answer: superior education and its benefits should exist primarily for the elite, but little or no schooling for the masses. John W. Gardner summed it up: "Most human societies have been beautifully organized to keep good men down."

In recent times, however, the concept of equal educational opportunities for all has won wide acceptance. Nations and men — even while they struggle to make equal educational opportunities a reality — have already begun to move toward still another important and exciting goal:

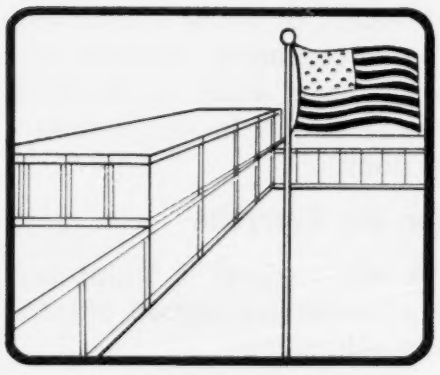
Excellence in Education for Everyone

The journey toward excellence will require a major and continuing effort by educators and all other concerned citizens to improve every level and aspect of education.

AMERICANS BELIEVE IN EDUCATION . . .

Since the formative years of this nation, Americans have consistently demonstrated their belief in the value of public education. In 1787, the infant nation adopted the Northwest Ordinance that expressed a basic belief and stated a fundamental policy to guide its future growth and westward expansion: "Religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, **schools and the means of education shall be forever encouraged."**

The historic "American Dream" has been of a land in which every citizen would have the opportunity for a richer and fuller life, with education opening the doors to opportunities designed to enable each youngster to reach his maximum potential. Almost everyone has strongly believed that the economic health of the nation, the rising standards of community and family life, and the general welfare rest upon sound foundations of adequate education for all.



In support of these beliefs, Americans have made substantial investments in their constantly expanding system of elementary, secondary and higher education.

. . . BUT WINDS OF DOUBT ARE BLOWING.

In every part of the nation, however, questions are being raised about modern-day education. Men and women in all walks of life — including students — are questioning traditional values and methods, and are finding them wanting when weighed against emerging values and current needs. Many people are concerned about education in general, or about specific policies and practices.

CONCERNS OF POLICYMAKERS

Many legislators and other policymakers are convinced that the educational system is not doing the job expected of it, in spite of greatly increased investments in recent years. A growing number believe that the so-called educational establishment has resisted making the changes that are urgently needed to modernize school systems and to revise outmoded curricula and programs. Some are concerned that many children who are handicapped by early childhood deficiencies and environmental influences attend schools that do little to prepare them for productive lives. There also is a growing concern that more confusion and even disaster may be inevitable unless many of the current problems and potential dangers are promptly identified and resolved.

CONCERNS OF PARENTS

Charges are frequently made that schools neglect such basic responsibilities as helping all students to develop worthwhile personal goals, appropriate moral and ethical values, and emotional stability. Because of their desire for better education for their children and more efficient use of the educational dollars, many parents are often frustrated by the minor role permitted them in making decisions relating to school operation and policy determination. They are raising many questions about **what** is taught, **how** it is being taught, and **who** is teaching it. Some are bothered by what appear to be attempts to manipulate or control educational planning and operation for the bene-

fit of special interest groups. At the same time others claim that education is not adequately serving the needs of some minority groups or of substantial numbers of students.

CONCERNS OF STUDENTS

Many young people have come to believe that education is neither adequate nor relevant in terms of their own goals and objectives, as they now see them. Some claim the schools do not provide sufficient challenge; others insist that traditional educational methods are counter-productive and often lead to antagonisms, rebellion and even withdrawal from the formal educational system. Students are concerned that the educational process is failing to prepare them to live in the twenty-first century, or even to live satisfactorily under present conditions.

CONCERNS OF TEACHERS

Teachers are increasingly restive. Some are threatening strikes or actually walking picket lines. As sensitive human beings, many are disturbed about disruptions in the classrooms, economic uncertainties, changing student populations, confusion about educational innovation, and the limited opportunities for them to participate in important decisions relating to education. They worry about what appears to be complacency on the part of state and local policy makers, educational institutions and other agencies in matters that vitally affect education.

CONCERNS OF TAXPAYERS

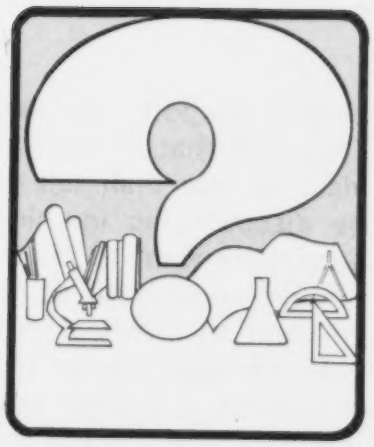
Many people appear to be losing confidence in the public schools: there have been many sharp criticisms directed at school administrators and boards of education, and bond issues and tax increases have been repeatedly rejected at the polls. Many taxpayers contend that inequitable and indefensible local property tax levies for school support can no longer be tolerated. They point to gerrymandered and inefficient districts, outdated practices, overlapping services and inadequate plan-

ning to support their demands for needed educational reforms. They feel that their investments in education may not only be yielding less than full value, but in some cases may actually be discouraging learning and stimulating anti-social attitudes. Taxpayers want to know, and rightly so, what they are getting for their education dollars. They want **accountability.** They are insisting that school administrators and teachers be accountable for what comes out of their schools, but they also want legislators and other policy makers to be held accountable for planning and putting into effect needed improvements in all aspects of education.

The angry taxpayer, the worried school administrator, the puzzled board member, the harried legislator and the frustrated parent give testimony today to the fact that American schools are either in — or rapidly approaching — a financial and confidence crisis.

THE ISSUE IS NOT WHETHER THE NATION CAN AFFORD THE HIGH COSTS OF MODERN EDUCATION, BUT WHETHER IT CAN AFFORD THE GROWING TURBULENCE AND LOW PRODUCTIVITY IN ITS SCHOOLS THAT RESULT FROM HAPHAZARD CHANGES THAT FAIL TO MEET THE NEEDS.

WHAT DOES SOCIETY EXPECT FROM EDUCATION?



The nation's youth receives its education in a variety of ways. Much of this education is informal in nature, and results largely from the influences and conditions of the home and neighborhood, societal institutions, the media and the totality of each child's environmental surroundings. Formal education is provided primarily by the schools and institutions of higher learning. An individual's total education is thus a combination of his experiences in both informal and formal education. The fact that these experiences are interrelated has often been ignored.

Generally speaking, society expects the schools to provide young people with an education designed to enable them to live productively in a rapidly changing world. Society, however, is not a single system or unit with like interests, ambitions and goals. Rather, it is made up of many diverse systems and subsystems, all exerting — and, of course, subject to — different pressures. As a result, expectations as to the role and function of education differ widely.

WHAT, THEN, ARE SOME OF THE EXPECTATIONS FOR EDUCATION IN OUR DIVERSE SOCIETY?

☐ The most common expectation is that education will help prepare youth to attain their full potential and to be able to cope with the problems of a rapidly changing society. To achieve this purpose, the schools must provide a variety of learning experiences that will help students

to develop rational procedures for living in a complex society and to be able to make responsible decisions. If this expectation is to be realized, the schools will have to emphasize learning activities that encourage student initiative and constructive participation in decision making. Activities that result in the development of attitudes of negativism, frustration, and passivity can no longer be afforded.

☐ A frequently accepted expectation is that the schools will assume many of the responsibilities that have traditionally been assigned to the home and church, such as the development and maintenance of moral and ethical values for the young. At the same time, schools are expected to help each individual to develop a value system in keeping with his own needs and aspirations as well as with those of the changing society.

☐ Another expectation is that the schools will give priority to the task of providing children with basic skills and moving them steadily along the road to material success.

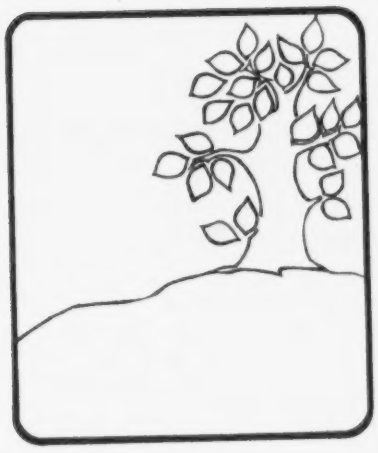
☐ Still another expectation is that the schools will be primarily concerned with the development of the complete child — his emotions, sense of self-worth, use of freedom and other social qualities.

☐ Many people expect education to be the major agent of social change. They expect that it will solve or at least alleviate most, if not all, social, political, economic and environmental problems.

It is often difficult for groups holding such diverse expectations to communicate, since their social aspirations and perceptions differ. Each has a different frame of reference, each interprets developments according to its own standards. A black militant, a liberal integrationist and a conservative school board member may view the mission of the schools in very different terms. What is rational to one may seem completely irrational to the others. Many programs designed to involve students and their parents in the process of education have been ineffective because of failure to understand their perspectives or to communicate meaningfully with the students and parents. Instead, both groups have often become alienated.

The failure of diverse groups to communicate with each other and to attempt to understand the variety of expectations of the others has contributed to many of the problems in education.

With such differing views and expectations, is it any wonder that policy makers and educators find it so difficult to define clear objectives and the means to attain them?



. . AS THE TWIG IS BENT . . .

'Tis education forms the common mind. Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined.

Alexander Pope

In the early 18th century, Alexander Pope compressed one of the fundamental truths of education into a short verse stating a view now supported by modern scientific data: young children develop best in an environment of love, kindness, acceptance, stimulation and diverse learning experiences. In short, all aspects of the environment of a child influence the kind of an adult he will become.

What are some of the influences which significantly affect the child for better or for worse?

Early Childhood Experiences

Many experiences have a lifetime impact on children. Unfortunately there are some unfavorable ones: poverty, hunger, violence and hatred. The effects of early deprivation can never be fully overcome. On the other hand, such early experiences as security, love, understanding and encouragement have lasting benefits.

The Family and the Home

It is in this setting that the so-called life style of each person is developed. Since each child is unique, an appropriate degree of individuality and a sense of responsibility should be fostered in the home. Parental attitudes and actions at this stage have lifelong impacts.

The Neighborhood and the Community

Because the environment can help or hinder — perhaps even prevent — development of an individual's potential, the coordinated efforts of government, business, industry, labor, the home, community service agencies, the churches and the schools are needed to support education from early childhood to old age. It is essential to involve all of the ethnic, racial, religious, and economic elements of society, and to invite the participation of youth in order to make the neighborhood and community an inviting place for all.

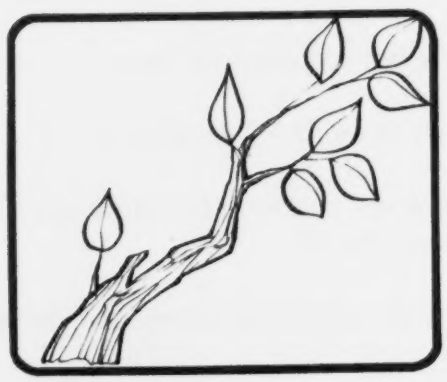
The State, Nation and World

Developments in communications technology have brought the state, nation and world into the livingroom of almost every child. The impact, in educational terms, must never be underestimated. Unfortunately much of what children see on television, hear on radio and read in the newspaper reflects man's inhumanity to man, greed, violence, hunger, poverty and a general disregard of man as a human being. Since what children see, hear and read is often very real to young minds, the environments of the state, nation and world should be widely discussed, analyzed, and evaluated in the home, the church, the school and the community. They must not be ignored in the search for excellence in education!

Educational Leaders Need to Understand That:

- When an individual does not have the opportunity to develop his full human potential he tends to become concerned primarily with "self" and think primarily in terms of food, clothing, shelter, bodily needs and possessions. Selfishness and greed often follow. Excessive emphasis on materialism tends to encourage injustice and inequity, whereas appropriate education should foster justice and equity and help to improve the life style and contributions of both the individual and society.

- With increasing affluence and modern processing and marketing techniques bringing material goods more easily within reach of the individual, and with education having the potential to induce a higher regard for self-development and consideration of others, there must be new concern for quality and human development.



Changing social mores, shifting ethical and moral attitudes, and new priorities create substantial influences upon youth which must be reckoned with in our search for excellence.

SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION

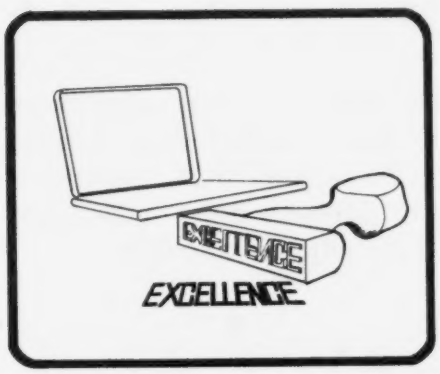
What should be the thrust of the educational system in meeting the needs of the nation's children, youth and adults?

THE TIME HAS COME FOR AMERICANS TO ASK SEARCHING QUESTIONS

- What do we want our children to become?
- What do we want children to value?
- How do we want children to behave?
- What do we want children to know about themselves and the world about them?
- What do we want children to be able to feel, touch, smell, see and hear?
- What abilities do we want children to develop?
- What tasks should children be able to perform?
- What should children know about deriving pleasure? About freedom? About responsibility?
- What should children know about making choices and selecting alternatives? And how can they learn to deal constructively with the constant fact of change?

Historically, the educational system has been reasonably successful in assisting students to learn **how to do the "right" things, how to perform** and **how to act,** but it has not been very successful in helping them to learn **how to think, how to value and judge, how to balance** and **how to perceive.** It should be apparent that the educational system needs to emphasize individual creativeness and leadership as opposed to "followership." Curriculum and structural changes will be essential, since the future will demand citizens who **think** rather than merely remember.

FURTHERMORE . . .

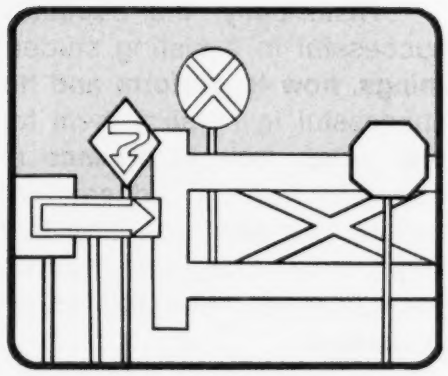


There will have to be an increasing emphasis on **quality,** in the search for excellence, in all aspects of education. Curriculums should **not** be tightly bound to the traditional academic fields.

Both teachers and students will need to be more flexible in curricular planning, and each learner should have more freedom to develop his own educational program.

Modernizing the curriculum is a very difficult task, but a dynamic society must do away with static and obsolete curriculums if it is to serve adequately the needs of the learners.

BARRIERS ON THE ROAD TO EXCELLENCE



Although we know more about the problems, more about the needs, understand the change process better than ever before and have more expertise in handling it, little has been done in most states to effect meaningful changes in education.

There have been some changes: more students have been enrolled, more classroom units have been created, more teachers have been hired, more buildings have been built, and more curriculums have been added. **But, in general, there have been few significant changes affecting the quality of education.**

WHY?

Sometimes desirable changes are stymied by the human tendency to maintain the **status quo,** or are blocked by the tendency of social systems to seek some form of **equilibrium.** In other situations, the sheer **size and structural rigidity** of a system makes change almost impossible. Sometimes the **ordeal of change** is the problem: new ways of doing things may seem to be too painful or too difficult for many people to undertake.

Needed changes are sometimes side-tracked or blocked by **influential groups** or power structures for their own selfish reasons. **Outmoded legal provisions** that perpetuate inequities and inequalities often present serious barriers.

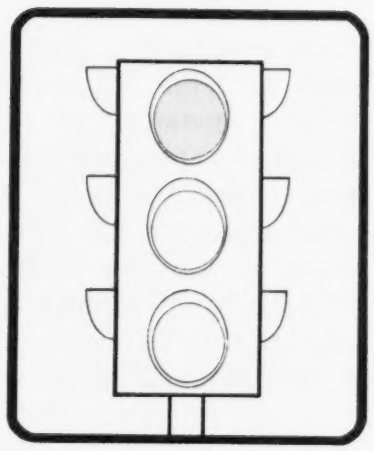
Still another barrier to change is the fact that most of the **funds available** to education are required for day-to-day operations with the result that there is seldom enough money for needed research, let alone actual innovation. The very techniques of **year-by-year budgeting** may hinder the implementation of changes. Moreover, archaic **patterns of school organization,** which often result in systems that are too large or too small, may serve as barriers to needed changes. Similarly, the lack of adequately formulated and **defensible goals and objectives** for education at state and local levels is likely to be a major barrier to the implementation of needed changes.

AND, THERE ARE MANY OTHER BARRIERS ON THE ROAD TO EXCELLENCE:

- Obsolete and inadequate physical facilities and equipment.
- School environments that fail to recognize the dignity and worth of the student and the necessity for his involvement in the educational process.
- Little planning beyond the current fiscal year.
- Failure of some state education agencies to provide necessary leadership, coordination, and services.
- Many school boards or administrators, or both, that are out of step with modern times and current needs.

CHANGES ARE NEEDED

TO OVERCOME BARRIERS



Since the purposes and goals of a society and of its educational systems are interrelated, excellence in one demands excellence in the other. When citizens of a state or nation make excellence their goal and have competent leadership they can attain or at least closely approach it in their schools, government, business, and industry.

The search for excellence in education is the responsibility of everyone — legislators, educators, students, parents and the general public. Excellence can be attained only as each person, system or institution moves away from indifference and mediocrity in the search for the fullest development of human potential at all levels. This means that we should seek to attain the highest possible standards in the home, the school, the community, government and industry.

It should be evident that we must change some of our attitudes toward, and procedures in, education.

Leaders in educational fields, lay citizens and legislators will find it necessary to raise their sights.

Educators will have to serve as facilitators of the learning process rather than primarily as dispensers of knowledge. Those in positions of state leadership will have to assist local systems and educational institutions to become aware of — and to accept — promising alternatives to many present practices.

Lay citizens will no longer be able to see themselves as "exploited taxpayers" who pay the bills and receive little in return. They will need to recognize that education is an investment in mankind, in the society in which they live, and in the well-being of the nation.

Legislators will no longer be able to think of themselves primarily as "watchdogs" of public funds, bound to dole them out grudgingly, and often only in response to crisis situations. Instead, they will have to assume their proper role: the wise and considered allocation of public funds based upon adequate planning and research.

✔ **It will be necessary for most of us to modify, or in some instances abandon, outmoded traditions about education.**

However, we must not lose sight of the fact that change for the sake of change is a waste of time and energy. any change in education must hold promise of improving the quality of education. The learners are the ultimate concern: when the system does not meet their needs it must be changed to do so.

The traditional financial base. It is clear that education cannot and should not continue to rely on local property taxes for the major share of its financial support. Feasible alternatives must be found, including increased support from state and federal non-property tax sources.

The traditional concept of a nine-month school year. In the light of modern requirements and needs, the concept of a nine-month school year needs to be re-examined and modified if we are to better utilize available facilities, services and human resources.

The traditional organizational structures and programs. Some promising alternatives to traditional organizational patterns, such as reorganized school districts and administrative structures, differentiated staffing, team teaching, flexible scheduling and individualized instruction are available and need to be given thoughtful consideration by educators and concerned citizens in every state.

✔ Significant curriculum changes will be necessary if we are to bring excellence into our school systems.

The curriculum of the future must be flexible and forward looking. It must provide for individual differences in interests, expectations, and learning. What is important to one student may not be as important to another.

The curriculum should be designed to:

- Help students to think — not just to remember.
- Help young people to learn to recognize and evaluate alternatives.
- Help learners to accept the responsibilities that go with freedom.
- Help individuals to develop a sound base for rational decision making.

Whatever shape the curriculum takes, it ultimately must focus on the problems of living together in a densely populated and complex world.

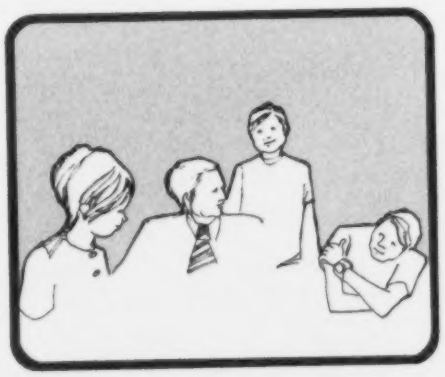
✓ The bureaucracy of education must change if excellence is to be achieved in the learning process.

A recent nationwide study led to the conclusion that most schools are so pre-occupied with order and discipline they have little time for **real** education. Ways must be found to do away with the structured regimentation of many schools, and make them, instead, places where learning is a joy rather than a rigid and counter-productive system that tends to encourage rebellion, failure, and drop-outs.

✓ Changes in many laws relating to education are essential if the search for excellence in education is to be fruitful.

Legal provisions for the organization, operation and support of education can either facilitate or prevent the attainment of educational excellence. Laws which perpetuate inequities for taxpayers, inequalities in opportunities for students, and ineffective policies and practices must be systematically reviewed, and revised or eliminated as necessary.

✓ The preparation of educators will need to be changed, if the goal of educational excellence is to be attained.



What should be the purposes and goals of programs and procedures for the preparation of educators? How should these be related to the purposes and goals for elementary, secondary, and other aspects of education? How can the effectiveness of programs and procedures be determined unless these have been agreed upon and clearly stated?

Some schools and colleges of education are attempting to deal with issues such as these as a basis for planning systematically for improvements in their own teaching programs and for determining their adequacy and effectiveness. Fortunately, they are recognizing that an "ivory tower" approach is neither appropriate nor realistic. Instead, they are seeking the cooperation of state education agencies, local school systems, and other appropriate groups in planning improvements.

✓ Appropriate procedures for evaluation and establishing accountability are essential to excellence in education.

New and more effective processes for evaluation and accountability must be devised. The concepts, however, must not be applied only to the student, as was formerly the case, but to everyone directly involved in education: the school board, the administrators, the teachers and the students.

SOCIETY IS DEMANDING EDUCATIONAL CHANGE,

WHY?

PEOPLE HAVE CHANGED

A larger proportion of the population is better educated and informed than ever before, and understands the value of high quality education in an increasingly complex society. As a result, many people have become convinced that the kind of education available in the 19th and early 20th centuries is no longer adequate. Those who will live in the 21st century will need a different kind of education.

SOCIETY HAS CHANGED

Changes have occurred in every society and will continue to occur in future societies. Most people readily accept such a premise. But many seem to have difficulty in recognizing the **increasing rapidity** with which societal changes are occurring. To understand the implications of these changes for the educational system, one need only to consider that many of the present jobs will not even exist a decade from now; and some of those that will exist have not yet been defined. Educators and lay citizens urgently need to cooperate in re-examining the present educational system, and make every effort to modify those aspects that are no longer defensible in terms of the needs of a rapidly changing society.

And Other Factors Influence Change . . .

KNOWLEDGE EXPLOSION

The burgeoning effects of all sorts of new discoveries — new methods and ideas for achieving goals, new insights into behavioral patterns, and new processes for solving complex problems — emphasize the need for many changes in education. Exploring and teaching vast new bodies of knowledge will require imaginative techniques and methodologies.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Insofar as education is concerned, advances in technology — especially in the communications field, including radio, television, the computer, faster and better printing — have had only a limited impact. More advances are coming. Thus far, education has made far too little intelligent use of these powerful new technological devices. Such tools must be put to greater use in the quest for excellence.

NEW PROCESSES

As an outgrowth of new technologies, innovative processes are being developed. In order for these processes to be of maximum benefit to the society, it will be necessary to develop a systematic method for linking their workings to the average citizen. In other words, these processes will be most important when they are used as direct means to reach the goals of citizens, rather than merely as means which simplify the tasks of administrators. Everyone should remember that a direct linking of new social processes and societal goals can be accomplished only when there is some **bridge of mutual understanding, communication** and **good will** between members of the general society and those who are utilizing these new processes.

New knowledge, new technology and new processes provide tools for reshaping society and building a better life. At the same time it must be recognized that these advances often create additional problems that need to be solved.

How Can Needed Changes In Education Be Brought About?

Changes in education should not be haphazard or left to chance. **Effective changes must be carefully and systematically planned.** As societies change and their needs change, the opportunities for learning and the procedures for facilitating learning must also change. While much educational change can "just happen," **needed** change must be **made to happen.** This can best be accomplished through systematic long-range planning. But it should be clear that planning — by itself — will never do more than produce plans. Adequate planning requires carefully prepared procedures for implementation and follow-through.

COMMUNICATION AND INVOLVEMENT

Effective communication is vital in planning educational change. All concerned groups, as well as the public at large, must understand the reasons for the proposed change. Without adequate communication and involvement, there is always danger that public skepticism, serious challenge and possible rejection may prevent or delay needed changes. Education leaders will need to keep the public — parents, teachers, legislators and students — fully informed about the strengths and weaknesses of the educational structure and changes that are being planned.

Public understanding is essential if planning for change and general acceptance of educational innovations are to be achieved.

CHANGE STRATEGIES

Needed or desired changes can be brought about in a variety of ways. In essence, however, virtually every planned change is effected by employment of one or more of three basic strategies:

- **The involvement and education of people who would be affected:** Change occurs as a result of a better understanding of the needs and the modification of personal attitudes.

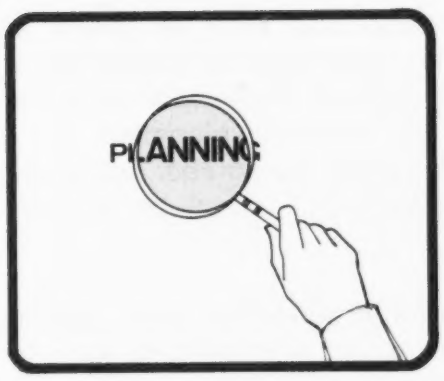
- **Use of authority and power:** Change is brought about by unilateral exercise of authority and power.

- **Demonstration and diffusion of practice:** Change is brought about by rationally describing and demonstrating the potential benefits.

Each basic strategy for effecting change has obvious advantages and disadvantages. The education and involvement process is probably the "best" strategy in terms of **long-range effectiveness,** but the wise use of power and authority may sometimes be needed for **short-range efficiency.**

In every instance, the apparent advantages and disadvantages of a proposed strategy for effecting change must be carefully considered in the context of the ultimate goal or goals. **The "best" strategy, in terms of achieving the goal or needed change, is the one that can most effectively reduce resistance to the desired change.** More often than not, the "best" stategy will probably be some appropriate combination or blend of the three basic strategies.

> ***Needed changes usually will be brought about as the result of well-conceived and carefully considered plans.***



LET'S TAKE A LOOK ---

PLANNING CAN

IMPROVE EDUCATION

Long considered desirable — even though intentions have been better than performance — planning for educational change in today's society is essential, even mandatory. The mandate for planning for change comes directly from the people. But if planning is to result in needed educational change, it should **not** be utilized as a device to preserve the status quo. It must be a rational procedure that will help to provide useful learning experiences for people of all ages, and from all social, economic and racial groups.

Sound planning must be **future-oriented** even while it identifies and offers solutions for current problems. In other words, it must be practical and deal with present problems as well as with emerging needs. Programs for learners must prepare them to deal effectively with the problems and changes that now exist, as well as those they are likely to encounter in the years and decades ahead.

Since the best education possible constitutes the only sound basis for progress, planning for the improvement of education must have a high priority in any society. However, those concerned with planning, as well as those who will be affected by planning, must understand at the outset that there is a significant difference between a **planning** society and a **planned** society, and that the former — rather than the latter — should be a major goal in every democratic society.

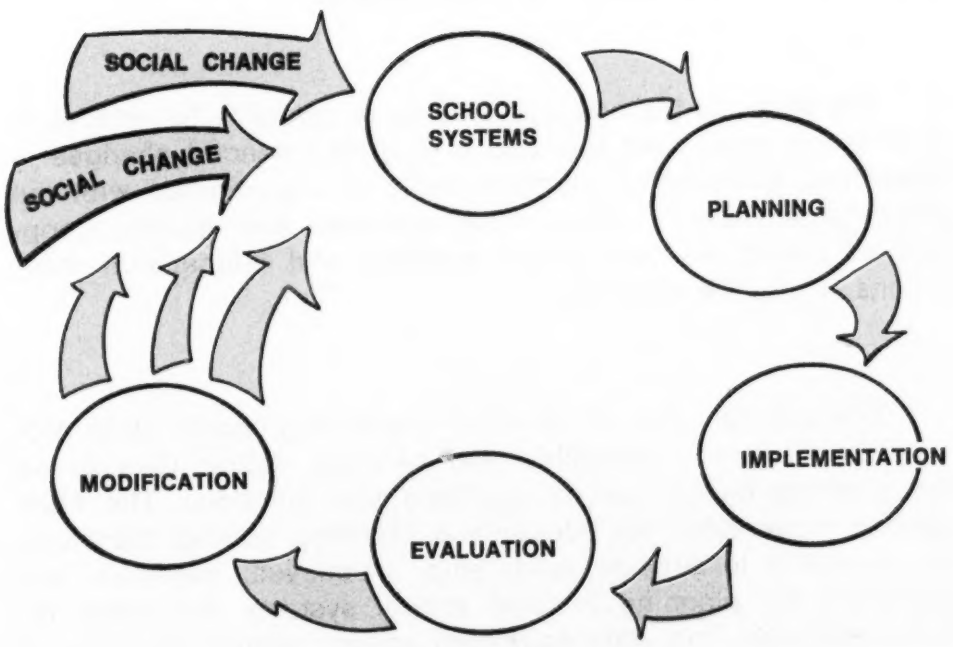
Those involved in educational planning must be aware of the implications of the changing environments in which learners live. Exploitation and waste of natural resources, pollution in all of its forms, exploitation or under-development of a significant proportion of the world's human resources, and other monumental problems of Space-Ship-Earth, cannot be ignored in planning for education.

Since the need for improvements in education is so critical to the welfare of the citizens of each state, and perhaps even to the nation's survival, educational planning and the subsequent steps of implementation must not be left to happenstance. At the present time, far too many educational decisions are made on a day-to-day or year-to-year basis, with far too little effort made to identify fundamental problems and to develop long-range, comprehensive plans designed to resolve them.

Appropriate long-range comprehensive planning will:

- ☐ Provide procedures by which pertinent information can be assembled, analyzed, and utilized to determine needs.
- ☐ Provide a mechanism for identification of goals and objectives and establishing priorities.
- ☐ Include procedures by which alternative courses of action, based on established priorities, can be identified, and the implications or consequences of each determined.
- ☐ Make possible orderly and systematic procedures for achieving needed changes.
- ☐ Include provisions and procedures for the implementation, evaluation of developments, and possible modification of the change.

Only when and where there is comprehensive and co-ordinated planning, effective implementation, realistic evaluation, followed by any necessary modification, is significant progress likely to be made in improving education. Because change in society is a continuing phenomenon, the cycle of planning, implementation and so on must be continuous.



WE MUST FIRST PLAN HOW TO PLAN

This seeming paradox points up the necessity to develop appropriate structures and procedures through which planning can be accomplished. Education for the future will require continuous and systematic planning. Effective planning does not "just happen." We must **plan** for **planning.**

The state, as the agency primarily responsible for education in America, must take the lead in planning needed changes in education. Educational planning must be coordinated with the planning activities of other state agencies and groups. Cooperation among various school systems and educational institutions is equally essential.

The principal role of the state in planning should be to provide the essential leadership and services, rather than to do the planning except for its own role and functions. The state agency responsible for educational planning should, therefore, be expected to provide leadership, incentives, expertise and resources for planning in local school systems and other related agencies. The state education agency should also help to make clear the need for planning, develop general guidelines, provide appropriate data, resources and services, consult with local leaders and planners on technical matters, and, insofar as feasible, build state and local planning recommendations into the provisions for support. It should be clear that there is a significant difference between the concept of providing the leadership, resources, services and coordination essential for effective planning and that of doing the actual planning.

A STATE MIGHT ORGANIZE FOR PLANNING IN VARIOUS WAYS:

- **It could provide** **A CENTRAL PLANNING AGENCY**

  Under this plan a single, centralized planning unit, usually as an adjunct to the legislative or executive branch, would do the planning for all state agencies — educational and non-educational.

OR

- **It could provide** **A STATE AGENCY FOR COORDINATION OF PLANNING**

  Within this organizational framework, each state agency, including education, would provide most of the planning leadership and services in its own area, but an agency created for that purpose would coordinate the planning. Under this arrangement all state agencies are encouraged to adopt a cooperative approach to planning which would reflect the needs of the entire state.

OR

- **It could provide for** **EACH STATE AGENCY TO ASSUME ITS OWN PLANNING TASKS**

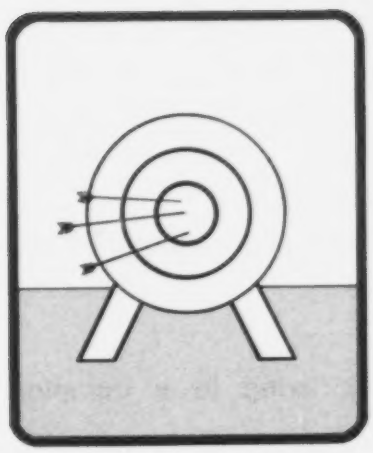
  Under this system, the planning responsibility of each agency of government, including education, rests with the agency itself. The coordination tasks must then be assumed by the governor and legislature through the processes of legislation and appropriations.

Regardless of the organizational pattern used, it is essential that the state education agency provide the leadership, services and coordination for planning needed improvements in education in the state. The organization and procedures that are established, however, should be carefully designed to meet the special needs and conditions in each state.

Some states have utilized outside experts or consultants to conduct studies and develop recommendations. This procedure may be efficient in terms of preparing a report, but it is usually deficient in assuring long-range results. It does not, as a rule, enable people in the state to learn much about or become involved in the planning process.

Other states have provided for the establishment of an especially competent planning committee or council appointed by the governor, the legislature, or the state board of education. The primary functions of such a committee or council relate to the development of policies, provisions for coordination of effort, and the obtaining of agreement on proposals that are submitted. Such a group, usually comprised of leading lay citizens and educators, can assume an important leadership role by:

- Appointing a study director or coordinator;
- Creating special study committees as needed;
- Arranging for special assistance as necessary, including the resources of the state education agency;
- Encouraging other educational organizations and institutions to sponsor or conduct relevant studies; and
- Serving as a "clearing-house" or coordinating agency for recommendations pertaining to needed educational change.



SETTING GOALS: A PRIMARY STEP IN PLANNING

A Roman philosopher once observed that "unless you know to what port you are sailing, the direction of the wind makes little difference." In similar fashion, planning for needed educational improvements is likely to be ineffective unless the desired goals are clearly defined and agreed upon. Such goals should always be based on determined needs, and must be:

- Clearly stated and accepted;
- Understood by those who are concerned;
- Fully implemented;
- Periodically evaluated; and
- Modified as necessary.

Since the major purpose of education in a free society is to help each of its members fully develop his capacities and talents and to learn to utilize them appropriately, established goals for education should help:

- —to identify and discard elements of the social and cultural heritage that are no longer relevant or may handicap or prevent needed changes.
- —to ensure a continuing search for new and constructive solutions to current and emerging problems.
- —to create a favorable environment for learning and encourage excellence.

There must be goals for individuals as well as for society. They should include:

- —academic goals
- —personal achievement goals unique to the individual
- —practical goals for living in a complex society.

THE GOALS FOR EDUCATION MUST:

- **Be concerned primarily about students and their learning environments and opportunities;**
- **Provide a framework for developing the curriculum and instructional procedures;**
- **Provide a basis for measuring progress and determining the effectiveness of the procedures; and**
- **Be designed to assist every local school system to provide adequate educational opportunities for all from early childhood through the secondary school level.**

Goals for education should always be of great public interest and concern. Legislators and lay citizens should be encouraged to study, react to, and suggest changes in proposed statewide goals. Local school systems and schools should follow a similar policy. It is important that goals be understood and accepted by most people if they are to be attained.

INVOLVEMENT: AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT

A major component of effective educational planning is bona fide **involvement** of the people affected in order to develop understanding and support. This process becomes particularly important in view of the growing distrust of the so-called "establishment" and the challenges to authority and decision making. Long-range planning for education requires the active participation of competent and concerned lay citizens, educators, planning experts, consultants with special skills, local school boards, and representatives of educational associations and other relevant groups.

Planning for educational change should be generally recognized as a matter of major public interest and concern. Public policy makers, lay citizens and educational authorities need to join in cooperative efforts to study, react to, and suggest changes in proposed educational goals, priorities, policies, and plans. At the local level, school systems and schools should follow a similar policy of community involvement in an effort to obtain public understanding and acceptance of educational goals and plans for change and innovation.

Any agency responsible for planning will inevitably be faced with several potential dangers relating to the planning process:

- Major power struggles among state agencies and individuals to gain control of the planning process.
- Political pressures by groups that may believe they are threatened by plans or possible change.
- Conflicts among political authorities.
- Many pressing problems and crises, demands for budget preparation, and other immediate demands which sometimes make it impossible to do much long-range or systematic planning.

To overcome these potential obstacles to the necessary planning for education, it is essential that all interested people—educators and lay citizens—insist on and monitor carefully the long-range planning for education in their state.

WHO, THEN, HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PLANNING FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION?

The quick and easy answer is "everybody," but we have to define what we mean by "everybody." The state has the legal responsibility for education. The state is the society it serves and that society is made up of its individual members. Obviously, educational planning cannot be left to everyone; but, neither can it be left only in the hands of educators.

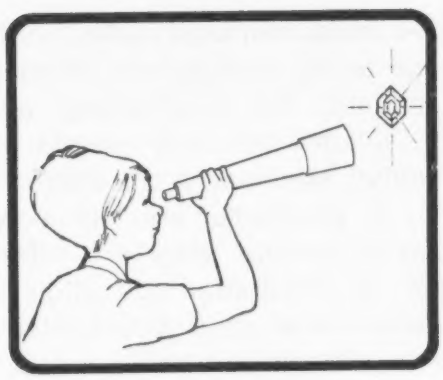
Professional educators have a role. Obviously, professional educators in the state education agency, the local school systems, and the colleges and universities should and must provide the leadership needed for educational planning. At the same time, if there is to be **effective** planning for excellence in education, the professional education associations at all levels must cooperate in providing essential leadership and services.

Non-educators have a role. It should always be remembered that lay citizens have a vital stake in the search for educational excellence. Legislators and other elected state and local officials, lay citizens and boards, and other responsible groups in the state and in each community must also assume some of the responsibility and provide some of the leadership needed in planning for excellence in education.

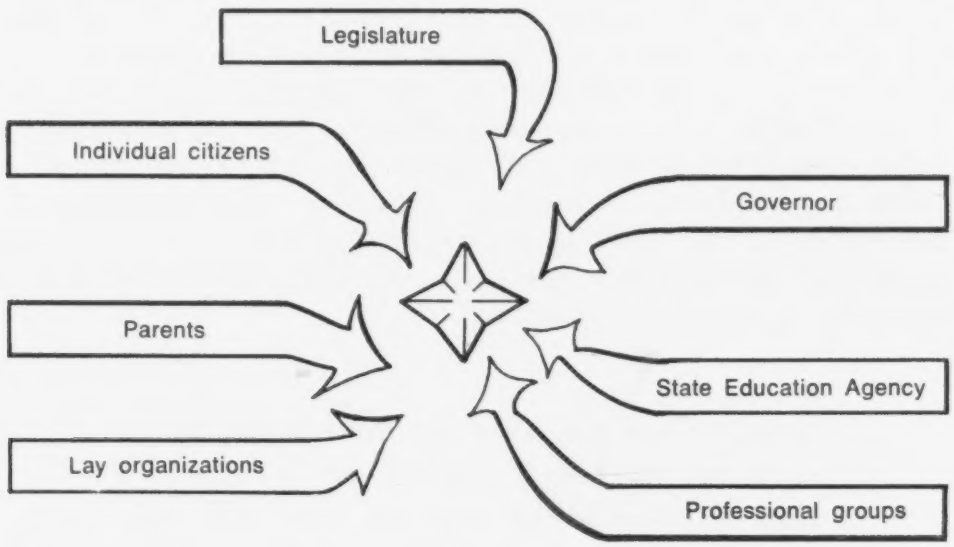
Cooperation is essential. The complexity of modern life in a swiftly changing society makes it necessary that leadership be provided to bring together all public agencies and institutions, along with individuals and groups from various segments of society, in a coordinated effort to meet the challenges. The day is gone when society and education can permit universities, colleges, teacher-training institutions, schools for adults, vocational and technical institutions, schools for the handicapped, community colleges and local elementary and secondary schools to operate as isolated entities. They must be coordinated in the interests of society as a whole.

Since education does not take place in a vacuum, no single agency or institution should attempt to assume the full responsibility for planning improvements in all aspects of education within a state or in a local school system. If students and society in general are to benefit from education, leaders from all segments of society will need to participate in the search for excellence.

WHO CAN INITIATE THE SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION?



The answer is — anyone. It can start any place.



But whoever starts it, once the search is on, it cannot be carried out by a single agency, a single group, or a single person.

Educational leadership is important in the search for excellence in education, but not more so than political leadership. In free, pluralistic societies such as our own, social policies, including the purposes, major policies, and many of the goals for education, are determined politically, and hopefully on a non-partisan basis.

Historically, the decision-making authority for public schools has been kept close to the people with elected representatives having the responsibility for determining educational policy. This responsibility includes not only general policies, but also many phases of school administration, instructional procedures and accountability. If problems are not solved satisfactorily within the educational system, they are referred back to the people. If educators do not change education in ways the public wants it changed, then the elected representatives of the people will do so through the established political processes.

EACH LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT HAS A ROLE

Federal educational policies are established by the Congress, by U. S. Courts, and, to a lesser extent, by government officials. State and local policies are developed by boards of education — all within limits prescribed by law. Policy making at all three levels needs to be attuned to the search for excellence in education.

During the past 15 years the federal government has assumed a more direct and active role in education than previously. Its most obvious influence has stemmed from the considerable sums of money it has provided for various aspects of education. Although there is neither a national system of education in the United States, nor a national agency that directs educational efforts, there are many federal agencies that are concerned about, and contribute to, education in the states through leadership and service.

The local educational agency (the board and professional staff) must accept responsibility for improving schools and creating excellence in all educational endeavors. Local educational units, perhaps more than any other group responsible for educational policies, must have a basic concern for and about **people** — parents, patrons, taxpayers, teachers, influential groups, and, most importantly, the students.

The responsibilities, as well as the opportunities, of local school systems and schools are especially important in:

- Developing and organizing new and relevant curriculums.
- Helping teachers adapt to the changing needs of the many diverse groups of learners.
- Providing in many instances some of the important services formerly left to the family, church, community leadership, or to chance.
- Providing the leadership which will foster achievement of district-wide educational goals.
- Seeking excellence in the educational system at a time when it is confronted with such vexing crises as taxpayers revolts, racial issues, teacher militancy and strikes, drug abuse, community power struggles, administrative bureaucracies, and student disruptions.

The state's role in education is being re-defined. Because public education is considered to be primarily a responsibility of each state, the state education agency, in concert with other state agencies, is in a logical position to facilitate needed changes in education.

The future success of education in this country rests largely with the state education agencies and the leadership and services they provide to plan and effect improvements in all aspects of education and to establish appropriate procedures for evaluating progress.

The legislature in every state should make it clear to every citizen that the major responsibility of the state education agency is to provide the leadership and perform the services needed to plan for, seek, and achieve educational excellence.

THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY CAN AND SHOULD LEAD IN THE SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION —

- By helping to develop defensible goals and policies, and at the same time, to provide for needed diversity in education. The state education agency can encourage and help the citizens and the officials of the state to agree upon appropriate state and national goals and priorities for education.

- By analyzing the needs of education and assisting in decisions regarding the allocation of resources. The state education agency must be concerned about the most effective utilization of the human and material resources for education.

- By becoming a major force for gaining public acceptance and support for alternative programs in education. The state education agency can help build a climate in the state to encourage needed changes in education. Furthermore, the state education agency should make every reasonable effort to improve unfavorable environments that limit learning opportunities.

- By working with local school systems and helping them to find solutions to pressing problems, by assisting to develop and implement local supplementary goals, and by providing leadership by developing appropriate procedures for evaluating programs, instruction, and learning progress.

Because of the many disagreements and controversies in society and at all levels of education, it will be difficult to achieve many of the changes that are urgently needed to effect significant improvements in the quality of education. But this difficulty should not divert state leaders from the task.

Citizens — including educators — in every state and community urgently need to understand that excellence in education can be attained or closely approached only when this goal is accepted as a top priority by everyone.

Excellence in education or in other aspects of society will NOT be attained easily.

We must plan for it.

We must set goals to reach it.

We must plan and implement bold changes and innovations.

We must establish priorities to achieve it.

We must set aside adequate resources to support it.

We must keep in mind the learning needs of everyone.

We must evaluate progress and modify the course as necessary.

We must never lose sight of EXCELLENCE as our primary goal.